

## **Arthritis Information Fact Sheet**

Arthritis is an umbrella term that encompasses more than 120 different diseases. The term arthritis means joint inflammation caused by tissue injury or disease in the joint; however, arthritis is characterized by a wide variety of symptoms. Arthritis and rheumatic conditions affect joints, surrounding tissues and/or connective tissues, and other parts of the body as well.

### **Arthritis in Idaho and the U.S.**

- Approximately 25% or 1 in 4 Idaho adults have doctor diagnosed arthritis (236,000) and in the U.S. nearly 70 million Americans have arthritis.
- Idaho adults who have arthritis report an average of 9.2 unhealthy days in the past 30 days vs. 4.1 unhealthy days reported by those without arthritis.
- People with arthritis report 5.1 days of poor mental health vs. 2.5 reported by those without arthritis.
- People with arthritis report an average of 3.5 days of being disabled in the past 30 days vs. 1.0 day of disability reported by those without arthritis.
- Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15 years and older.

### Cost

- Arthritis and rheumatic diseases cost the U.S. \$116.3 billion annually in direct and indirect medical costs (based on 1997 data, released in November 2003).
- Idaho cost: \$362 million per year (\$215 million in direct medical costs, plus \$147 million in indirect costs)
- The average cost of arthroplasty of the knee in 2000 was \$23,287.

### **COMMON TYPES OF ARTHRITIS INCLUDE:**

***Osteoarthritis*** - sometimes called degenerative joint disease. Cartilage on the ends of the bones in a joint breaks down, allowing bones to rub together and causing pain. Over time, the joint may lose its normal shape and bone spurs may grow on the edges of the joint.

***Rheumatoid arthritis*** - is an inflammatory disease where a person's own immune system attacks cells inside the joint capsule. Generally it is symmetrical in that if it occurs in one wrist or knee, it also appears in the other.

**Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis** - is a chronic condition that causes inflammation in one or more joints and begins before age 16. It is often difficult to diagnose because children often compensate well for loss of function and may not complain of pain.

**Fibromyalgia Syndrome** - is characterized by widespread aching, stiffness, fatigue and multiple tender points. People with this syndrome may also experience sleep disturbances, morning stiffness, irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and other symptoms.

## **OTHER TYPES OF ARTHRITIS INCLUDE:**

**Systemic Lupus Erythematosus** - also called SLE or lupus, is a type of autoimmune disease in which the body harms its own healthy cells. This chronic inflammatory disorder can affect many parts of the body including the joints, skin, kidneys, heart, lungs, blood vessels, and brain. Symptoms include extreme fatigue, joint pain and swelling, unexplained fever, rashes and kidney problems.

**Gout** - is a painful rheumatic disease that results from needle-like crystals of uric acid in the connective tissue, joint spaces or both.

**Ankylosing Spondylitis** - is a rheumatic disease that causes arthritis of the spine and sacroiliac joints and can cause inflammation of the eyes, lungs and heart valves. It can cause severe joint and back stiffness, loss of motion and deformity as life progresses.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

### **EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT:**

Getting the correct diagnosis is important because different forms of arthritis require different treatments. It can mean less pain, less joint damage and less disability.

### **EXERCISE**

Consult with your family physician or rheumatologist before beginning an exercise program. An exercise program should include:

- **Stretching** - keeps the joints and muscles flexible, maintains range of motion, enables you to maintain your activities of daily living, and relieves stress.
- **Muscle conditioning** - strengthening the muscles, which supports the joints and helps prevent injuries.

- **Aerobic conditioning** - aerobic activity improves heart and lung function, and contributes to weight control.

### **MAINTAIN HEALTHY WEIGHT**

Extra pounds means extra stress to joints, especially hips and knees, which can contribute to and aggravate osteoarthritis. (See Obesity fact sheet and Body Mass Index Chart under Healthy Living on the idahohealth.org web site home page, to determine healthy weight range).

Sources: Arthritis Foundation, American College of Rheumatology, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Disease, Nation Institutes of Health